

Attack on Titan: The Spartan Assault (Being Re-written)

by JoshMaxii

Category: Halo, Shingeki no Kyojin/é€²æ' fã•®å•"ä°°

Genre: Horror, Sci-Fi

Language: English

Characters: Cortana, Eren Y., Master Chief/John-117, Mikasa A.

Status: In-Progress

Published: 2013-09-21 05:34:22

Updated: 2015-09-16 02:46:53

Packaged: 2016-04-27 03:28:50

Rating: M

Chapters: 6

Words: 20,302

Publisher: [www.fanfiction.net](http://www.fanfiction.net)

Summary: Humanity has been under siege for over 107 years by an unrelenting force of man eating giants known as Titans. In that time, humanity has not gained a single victory in this one sided war. But just when things are at their bleakest, help arrives from the stars in the form of the UNSC super-soldier Master Chief Spartan Petty Officer John-117. Let the carnage begin!

## 1. Prologue: The Dream (Updated)

\*\*Author's Notes: Alright, this is the first part of the rewrite. I decided to simply keep the prologue, as I felt it still had a place in the story. The other chapters will be rewritten, mostly from the ground up. Some scenes may be kept, however chapters will be quite a bit longer and make more sense in the context of both AoT and Halo. I have taken many of your previous comments and suggestions to heart and have decided to do a bit more research into their respective worlds. \*\*

\*\*I am also once again searching for Beta readers to assist with making my writing better. All positions are currently open for Attack on Titan: The Spartan Assault and my new Familiar of Zero/Elder Scrolls Crossover From Heir to Familiar. If you want proof that both my writing and my commitment to the art of story telling has improved, be sure to check it out.\*\*

\*\*This chapter has simply been cleaned up from the sorry state that I first posted it in. It should flow better and have far fewer mistakes with grammar and pacing. I have a question for you guys though. Would you rather I keep the older chapters up until a new one is posted even though the story might not make sense half way through, or should I just tear them all down and post the new ones when they are ready so you know when the updates have occurred? Please PM me with your opinion, or leave it as a comment.\*\*

\*\*If you are interested in being a Beta reader, have an idea as to how to improve my writing and/or the story, or just simply wish to chat feel free to send me a PM. I look forward to hearing from you.\*\*

\* \* \*

><p><strong>The Dream<strong>

\*\*Wall Maria, Shiganshina - Year 845\*\*

\* \* \*

><p><em>Eren Jaeger was falling through a pale dawn sky, striped by pink and purple clouds. The wind roared in his ears, carrying whispers of terror and screams of agony. Long, crackling tendrils of lightning shattered the heavens, and Mikasa's face flashed before his eyes, her features bloodied and her eyes closed. Eren's own glistening emerald eyes widened as he reached out for her, only for her face to disappear in a blindingly bright flash of white light that burned his ocular nerves.<em>

\_ "Mikasa!" He cried out, distraught as the light faded and the soft, orange sky was replaced by one of burning blue fire. Amidst the swirling chaos he heard his mother scream, and looked about wildly, seeing nothing in the heat of the raging flames. Somewhere in the distance he heard cannon fire booming and stones crumbling as he let out a solemn cry for help, a single tear running down the side of his cheek.\_

\_ Out of the depths of the searing blue flames a massive, armored figure appeared and strode forward through the heat, seizing ahold of Eren's hand. With his fall arrested the startled boy gazed up into the figure's face. Only a bright, polished gold surface greeted his eyes reflecting his face back at him, framed by drab, olive green all around in a strange looking helmet. The figure held Eren's gaze for a moment before calling out to him in a deep, gravelly voice that echoed with an ethereal chime.\_

\_ "Erenâ€|Erenâ€|\_"

\* \* \*

><p>"Eren!" came Mikasa's sharp cry, slicing through the shroud of his mind and bringing Eren back into reality. The young boy's eyes widened for a moment as he regarded her standing over him, her long black hair swaying in the wind beneath the whispering branches of the oak tree he was laying against. Eren sat up, brushing his own charcoal black hair out of his eyes as he stared blankly at his best friend.<p>

"Wh-wha?" He began as Mikasa smiled slightly, something she seldom did. "Come on, we need to get back, it'll be dusk soon." She said, bending down to offer Eren her hand. He blinked a few times, as if dazed as he tried to recall his dream. A question formed on his lips as he gazed up at Mikasa.

"Heyâ€|Do you ever wonder what's up there Mikasa?" He asked, wiping drool from the corner of his mouth. The oriental girl blinked once before affixing him with her ever present neutral visage.

"You must still be half asleep if you can ask that sort of question. What do you mean by up there?" She would ask, taking a seat beside her friend for a moment.

"I meant the stars Mikasa!"

"It's just the sky Eren. There's nothing out there but the clouds and the canvas of night."

"I mean, what if there's someone up there wondering what it's like down here?"

"Like some sort of god? I don't know, I've never really thought about it"

"I'm not sure, perhaps there are beings in the sky, or other people out there among the stars..."

"Do you think we'll ever meet them if they do exist?"

"I hope so, don't you?"

Mikasa shook her head before looking to the sky. "What did you dream about Eren? Why would you ask such a question?"

She would ask, turning to face him. Eren blinked. "I can't really remember, but it felt like a long dream." Mikasa's eyebrows raised slightly at that.

"Are you okay Eren?" she would ask, starring into his emerald eyes with her steely blue ones. Eren would blink again, confused.

"Huh?" Eren asked, cocking his head to the side slightly. Mikasa stood a bit straighter, shifting her weight onto her other foot.

"Why are you crying?"

\* \* \*

><p>Unbeknownst to the two children on the planet below, Eren's question had already been answered. The vast expanse of space held many secrets far beyond the capability of the humans inhabiting this primitive world. Astronomy was a fledgling science at best, but even the most well educated individual would be unable to conceive of the force that was about to arrive. The cold darkness of space was rent asunder by a bright flash of blue light as a massive wormhole tore through the vacuum, regurgitating the remains of a derelict warship.</p>

The starship's titanium hull was scarred by plasma scoring as bits of debris floated about it, drawn to its gravity. The aft portion of the ship was all that remained, split from the bow right down the middle, its edges still glowing in the aftermath of the disaster. The slipspace rupture soon collapsed behind it, leaving the dead vessel caught in the planet's gravity well.

Within the bowels of the aft section, the greatest weapon ever devised by mankind slipped into peaceful slumber, ready to awaken at

a moment's notice. It would take four and a half years, but eventually the soldier sleeping in his icy pod would be able answer Eren's question personally. With any luck, he could give this new humanity a fighting chance against the greatest threat that they have ever known; The Titans.

## 2. Chapter 1: Awakening

\*\*Author's notes:\*\*

\*\*This part of the story takes place a day before the first battle of Trost, thus before Eren joins the Scouting Legion. I plan on writing a chapter every few days that will probably be as long or shorter than this one. However I pose a question to my readers;\*\*

\*\*Would you rather I post short chapters every few days, or longer chapters every week to week and a half? PM me to tell me what you think.\*\*

\*\*And now, without further ado, onto the story!\*\*

\* \* \*

><p>Awakening</p>

\* \* \*

><p>2557 AD - Four years after the Halo Event</p>

\* \* \*

><p>Deep within the uncharted regions of space, floating amidst a field of asteroids and debris, lay the battle scarred aft section of the UNSC heavy frigate, *Forward unto Dawn*. The dead warship had been split in two after a slipspace rupture, leaving the greatest hero in the history of mankind, a different mankind, stranded in deep space with no hope of returning home on his own. Known to the embattled human forces that fought for the very survival of their species as the Master Chief, John-117 of the SPARTAN-II program was at the tip of the spear in every major ground offensive in the waning months of the Human-Covenant war. It was he who found installation 04 or Halo, part of an array of weapon systems that were capable of wiping the galaxy clean of all life and an artifact of utmost religious significance to the members of the fanatical Covenant. To fire the Halos was to embark upon the Great Journey; the belief that the Covenant held that would allow them to become gods. After many days of harsh fighting, the Master Chief destroyed the Halo ring, shaking the Covenant to its very core after setting off a wildcat destabilization of the *Pillar of Autumn's* engines and escaped unharmed back to Earth.

In the ensuing months, he fought in the Battle of Earth upon Cairo Station, and in the streets of New Mombasa, assassinated the Prophet of Regret on Delta Halo, assaulted High Charity, the Covenant's massive floating Citadel city, and followed the Prophet of Truth, the last remaining religious leader of the Covenant, through a portal back to Earth. There, he fought in the jungles of Africa after falling several miles through the atmosphere and fought his way through swarms of Covenant alongside the Arbiter, a Sangheili or

Elite, to the town of Voi. It was there that he assisted UNSC and Separatist forces that had split from the Covenant in wiping out a flood infestation, and eventually lead to the unlikely allies following Truth through a portal to Installation 00, or the Ark. It was here that Truth planned to fire the Halo rings, and embark upon the Great Journey. He was only stopped when in a final, desperate act, the flood allied itself with the Master Chief and the Arbiter. In the ensuing conflict, Truth was struck down by the Arbiter, and the crisis was averted by the Master Chief, who stopped the firing sequence.

After the flood turned on the two allies, Spartan-117 boarded High Charity for the second time, only to find out that it was the home of the Gravemind, the leader of the flood. Fighting through the former Covenant Citadel, the Chief retrieved his lost AI companion, Cortana from the Gravemind's grasp, and escaped High Charity as it self-destructed with the Arbiter's assistance. Upon discovering that a replacement for installation 04 was being built by the Ark, The Chief and the Arbiter battled their way to the control room, and in the activated the incomplete Halo ring after a prolonged fight with 343 Guilty Sparks, a rampant Forerunner AI. Escaping the destruction of the ark in the Forward unto Dawn, the Master Chief and Cortana were tragically left stranded in space after a malfunction in the Dawn's slipspace drive, sheering the ship in half and teleporting the aft section into the unknown reaches of space.

Knowing that help wouldn't be arriving anytime soon, John-117 entered cryosleep to conserve energy as Cortana looked on, reminiscing over his parting words. "Wake me, when you need me." It has been four years since then, four long years. To an AI, four years is an impossibly long time to be alone with nothing but your thoughts and a frozen genetically augmented super-soldier for company. For Cortana, the experience was even worse due to her past trauma at the hands of the Gravemind. Without a given task, Cortana could only think, and think, and think. She pondered the fall of the Forerunners, the flood, the nature of the Human-Covenant War, and most of all, her relationship with John in her morbidly short life. He had been with her since the very beginning of her life, he was the only thing that kept her going, and gods be damned if anyone or anything tried to lay so much as a finger on him on her watch. He was her friendâ€|her only friend in this dark, cruel world. The day that he had been forced to leave her behind in High Charity was the blackest day in her life, but the things that she felt when he fought through hell inside the infested ship just to keep his promise to retrieve her went beyond words. To others she was just a hyper advanced computer program, but to John, she was a person, and he treated her like a human being worthy of respect, and the only person left alive deserving enough to call him by his real name.

\* \* \*

><p>Cortana glowed with a soft blue light, bathing the dark, airless cryobay with her shimmering radiance. It was from here that she stood vigilant over the Master Chief whilst he was embraced in icy slumber during those four long years, alone. But now, after all this time, something was wrong. Cortana felt it deep in her data streams as her distress call blared over the <em>Dawn's</em> com systems.

"Mayday, Mayday, Mayday- This is FFG201 Forward Unto Dawn requesting immediate eva- Survivors aboard, Prioritization code;

Victor Zero Five dash Three dash Sierra One One Seven"

A split second later a high intensity scan in the form of a bright orange wall of crackling light raked what remained of the Forward unto Dawn's\_ aft section, scrambling some of the still active electronics in the bay. She took a moment to analyze the signature as it passed, but was unable to pull anything from it. Fearing the worse, she altered her shimmering little blue ball of light into her human form. She was fairly attractive with short, dark blue hair hanging down ever so slightly into her vibrant blue eyes as she brought up the ship's systems. Shifting through the commands she brought up the manual interface for the cryobay before bringing up the pod that currently contained the Chief. Taking a deep breath, she activated the thawing process before turning around to watch the Spartan's pod defrost.

"Wake up Chiefâ€œ I need you."

The Master Chief slowly came to life before Cortana's virtual eyes, groaning softly as he shifted about. "Chief, take it easy! You've been out for a while!" Cortana cautioned, trying to reach her friend through his inevitable bout of disorientation. For a brief second, the Master Chief panicked, lurching forward to make contact with the acrylic housing of the cryo pod before pulling back. "Where are we?" He would ask in his low, gravelly voice. "We're still adrift aboard the Dawn" Cortana replied, seemingly relieved to finally speak to someone other than herself for the first time in over 4 years. "Why did you wake me?" Cortana's form flickered for a second before she answered. "Hang on, bringing your armor's systems back online." The Master Chief nodded as his Head's Up Display or HUD activated in his visor. He shifted about for a moment before Cortana's voice chirped in again. "Just so you know I rewrote your suit's firmware while you were out." The Chief grunted, nodding once again towards his companion. "You've been busy" He said shortly in his usual manner. Cortana smiled inwardly. It was good to finally speak with him again, even if John wasn't much of a conversationalist.

After giving the Chief a moment to adjust to the new upgrades, she instructed him to pull the manual release to exit the cryo pod, sending shards of ice spiraling off into the air where they hung suspended in the zero gravity. The Master Chief pushed himself away from the pod, allowing himself to float over to Cortana's holotank. She flashed a cocky grin at him "Seems like old times." The Chief might have smiled, but it was impossible for her to tell underneath the opaque golden visor of the green helmet he wore. "Ready to get back to work?" He replied, reaching for her AI chip. Cortana crossed her arms as her grin widened. "I thought you'd never ask!" She said somewhat teasingly as the Chief yanked her from the holotank and inserted her into the back of his helmet. Cortana's cool, liquid presence filled his mind as Cortana merged with the MJOLNIR armor's systems which acted as an AI core. "Ah, I missed this, did you know that?" She asked as she settled into the suit with a relieved sigh.

The Chief pushed himself away from the now inactive holotank and floated back to his cryopod, where he pulled his MA5C assault rifle from the side weapon rack. After checking the weapon over for defects, he pulled back the charging handle, and released it, cycling a round into the chamber before holstering the weapon on his back, where it magnetized solidly and wouldn't budge. "Alright, let's mo-

He began, only to cut himself short when a small, metal object collided with the side of his helmet. He snatched it out of the air, instantly recognizing the small metal bar as a deactivated Type-1 Energy weapon, or Energy sword. "This looks like the Arbiter's, he probably dropped it here on his way to the bridge" The Chief said, giving the handle a once over, turning it about in the zero gravity before attaching it to his right thigh. "His loss is our gain." Cortana chirped in as the chief began floating towards the open hallway.

Traveling in zero G had always been somewhat uncomfortable for the Master Chief, especially after the loss of Spartan James-005 during the battle of Reach. James' T-PACK had been hit by Covenant munitions and detonated, propelling his unfortunate comrade into the depths of space, never to be seen again. "Cortana, why aren't the Gravity generators online?" He asked gruffly, annoyed with his inability to walk on solid ground. Cortana frowned. "I haven't been able to repair them, the generators themselves were damaged when the portal collapsed. Give me a moment, activating your Mag Boots" She said, and half a second later the Chief felt his feet magnetize to the steel grating. "Thanks." He said, checking over his MA5C one final time before proceeding down the hallway.

"How long was I out?" the Chief asked as he came across an orange, holographic representation of what remained of the Forward Unto Dawn's outer hull. "Four years, seven months and ten days" Cortana replied after checking her internal clock. "Somebody should have found us by now." The Chief said gruffly, rounding the corner and proceeding down the hall. "About that, I've be—" Cortana began, only to be cut off as another wall of orange light tore through the ship's corridors. The Master Chief dove into cover behind a holotank, assault rifle at the ready as the orange light washed over him. "What was that?" He grunted as it passed down the other end of the hall. "Sensor scan, high intensity! It doesn't match any known patterns!" Cortana shouted as the entire ship shook violently under the scan. The rumbling soon subsided, and the Chief slowly stood up. "We need to figure out what's scanning us. Cortana, set a waypoint to the observation deck, we should be able to get a visual from there." A bright, blue diamond lit up on the Master Chief's HUD, and he proceeded further into the dark, twisting corridors of the ship.

\* \* \*

><p>Trost, Year 850- almost 5 years since the fall of Wall Maria<p>

\* \* \*

><p>It was a calm, peaceful day behind the mighty Wall Rose. The sun shone warmly in the early morning sky, its radiant beams lighting the land below. The town of Trost was just beginning to wake up as a cool, spring breeze swept through the town. The echoing of clopping hooves slowly became louder and louder as a precession of horsemen clad in green cloaks bearing the Wings of Freedom passed through the cobble stone central street. Townspeople began opening their windows and somberly watched the riders of the Scouting Legion pass on by as they made their way towards the far gate. Some of the riders upon their chocolate brown steeds bore a grim, determined look on their faces, their eyes cold as ice as they simply gazed on ahead as if envisioning their goal. Others looked like train wrecks, their hair

disheveled and their eyes wide and staring as they would glance nervously about. The lead man in the formation came to a stop a few hundred yards before the gate, raising his hand to signal the others and the entire column came to a grinding halt.<p>

"Something's not right here!" Erwin Smith; A tall, blonde man and the current commander of the Scouting Legion said, looking over to his right hand man, Captain Levi. The black-haired Captain looked unconcerned, but his eyes told a different story as he nodded and glanced skyward. Suddenly the earth began to shake violently, the ground rumbling beneath the hooves of the horsemen as the sky was suddenly split by a beam of vibrant, orange light that blasted away the clouds with a terrible screech. The sky itself tore open, revealing the black expanse of the heavens as a massive, gaping hole amongst the grounds. Erwin's eyes widened as the light suddenly vanished and the sky slowly returned to normal. Raising a hand, he snapped it forward issuing the order to advance as every man and woman in the scouting legion set their horses to full gallop towards the now opening gate.

Erwin turned to Hanji Zoe, a tall, brown-haired woman with large glasses. She was practically shivering in anticipation, her mind working feverishly as she attempted to discern the origin and consequences of the sky sundering beam. "This could change everything, everything!" She said, blushing strangely as she cupped the sides of her face. "What do you think it was?" Erwin asked, his face as unreadable as ever. Zoe clapped her hands like an eager child. "I don't know, but I'll do whatever it takes to find out!" Erwin nodded and spurred his horse onward, directing the rest of the legion to spread out into the Long-Range scouting formation. Levi checked his horse into place beside Zoe's patting her on the head once. "I know that look, don't get yourself killed!" he said nonchalantly in his ever cold manner as Zoe looked at him with her excited grin. "Be sure to watch your back Captain!" She giggled before moving to take her place in the formation as the entire force ran full speed towards where the light had appeared, set on an inevitable collision course that would change the world of mankind forever.

\* \* \*

><p><strong>Thanks for all your support so far guys, I was unsure what sort of reaction I would receive upon posting the first Attack on Titan/Halo crossover. You're the reason why I post this story instead of keeping it stashed away on a flash drive. I hope that you'll continue to enjoy my ideas in the coming days. Until next time!\*\*

### 3. Chapter 2: Landfall

\*\*Alright, new chapter! Sorry I didn't get it out sooner, I had a lot of housework and family visits this weekend. I struggled with this part, but hopefully the chapters to follow will be easier for me to cope with. \*\*

\*\*Author's note: This denotes speech in a language that the characters from AoT don't understand\*\*

\*\*Enjoy!\*\*

\* \* \*

><p><strong>Landfall<strong>

\* \* \*

><p><strong><em>UNSC Forward Unto Dawn<em>, Uncharted space - 2557  
A.D.\*\*

\* \* \*

><p>The Master Chief continued down the hallway, his heavy footsteps echoing in the bowels of the derelict <em>Forward Unto Dawn<em>. As he reached the end of the dark passage, he came across a massive, sealed elevator door. "This door looks sealed tightâ€|" He said, adopting a solid stance as he attempted to pry it open with his bare hands. "Chief, be careful!" Cortana chirped as the door opened, sucking all the air out of the hallway as the area depressurized. A trio of crates came hurtling towards the Chief, smashing against him and propelling him into the empty elevator shaft. "Because some areas of the ship may have lost pressureâ€|" Cortana continued a bit too late with her warning. The Master Chief clung to the wall of the shaft, grunting in reply. "Right"

He climbed upwards, hand over hand, the handholds groaning in protest. Suddenly, there was a loud rumbling from above as a chunk of debris came hurtling towards the Spartan. "Chief, look out!" Cortana cried out as the Master Chief leapt out of the way, latching onto another part of the wall. "I didn't think that the ship had deteriorated so badly." Cortana said as the Master Chief continued climbing, periodically dodging falling debris until he reached the top. Hoisting himself up through the open doorway at the top of the shaft, the Master Chief quickly proceeded down the hallway and into the Observation deck. He snatched up a couple of M9 HE-MP fragmentation grenades floating around in the zero gravity, presumably having fallen from the over turned weapons crate near the door way. The Observation deck was littered with similar crates as the Spartan made his way towards the catwalk overlooking the entire room.

"Chief, look! There's the blast shield controls." Cortana chirped, lighting up a waypoint of the Chief's HUD. The Master Chief approached the console, which stood perched at the end of the catwalk. He reached out, pressing the override icon. The deck shook as the titanium armor covering the thick windows slid upwards, revealing the black expanse of space before themâ€|and something else. "Okay, that's not what I was expectingâ€|" Cortana said, eyeing the giant, metal planet that the \_Dawn\_ had been orbiting for the past 4 and a-half years. Suddenly a loud, shrill screech filled the air as a beam of vibrant, orange light pierced the thick glass separating the Master Chief from the cold depths of space, shrouding him in light. Cortana shuddered, her neural net working feverishly to pull anything that she could from the beam. "Analyzingâ€|Chief, the planet itself is scanning us!" Cortana cried out, alarmed "Forerunner signatures confirmed!" In that moment, the surface of the planet fractured, opening in an aperture pattern. The opening glowed as the ship began to drift towards it, shifting and causing the crates to collide with the glass, chipping and even fracturing it in some places.

"Chief, the planet is pulling us into the surface with its gravity well! We need to get off of the \_Dawn ASAP, the second we cross the dome's event horizon the atmosphere will tear us apart!" Cortana shouted as John jumped into action, turning around to head back the way he came. "Where are the nearest escape pods?" The Chief asked as she ship shuddered, nearly throwing the Spartan off of his feet. "Aft vehical bay! Lighting up the nearest air lo-CHIEF!" Cortana shrieked as the \_Dawn\_ suddenly lurched forward, dislodging the Master Chief from the steel grating and sending him hurtling towards the already fractured glass. "Grab ahold of something!" the AI shouted, the Spartan grunting in response as he seized ahold of a weapon crate before smashing against the glass, causing it to spider web and finally break. The entire deck depressurized as the window shattered, sucking the Master Chief out into the depths of space and flying towards the planet below.

\* \* \*

><p><strong>Outside Wall Rose, Titan Territory<strong>

\* \* \*

><p>The Scouting Legion had been riding hard for the past half hour towards the direction in which the orange, sky sundering beam of light had appeared. The terrain was relatively smooth for the most part, made up of grassland with a few sparse groves of pine trees. A few empty hamlets were the only indication that humans had once lived in the area before the Titans moved in. The entire force was spread out in the Long Range Scouting formation, a primitive form of radar relying on flares fired from horseback to alert the rest of the legion if a Titan is spotted. Commander Erwin was hardly surprised when he saw a series of red smoke flares fly up from the left flank, indicating that a Titan had been spotted. Without skipping a beat, he selected a green smoke cartridge, attached it to the end of his flare gun and fired it to the right, signaling the formation to change direction. The entire legion followed his command, shifting to the right and completely bypassing the Titan as they continued onwards towards their goal.<p>

Suddenly, without warning, the sky was once again split by the vibrant orange beam, drawing the gaze of every man and woman in the Legion as they stared in awe. The sky opened, revealing the blackness of night above them once more as the clouds parted. Hanji Zoe trembled with excitement, while Erwin stared on; his face unreadable as a massive ball of fire came screaming through the atmosphere, breaking up into hundreds of smaller pieces as it fell. One such piece fell just a few yards away from the commander and his attendants, shaking the very earth itself. What looked like a mass of glowing, twisted metal sent dirt flying up into the air, accompanied by varying cries of alarm as more bits of falling debris landed throughout the formation.

Chaos ensued as red and black smoke flares arced high into the sky in a jumbled mash up of signals. With the falling debris having scattered the entire formation, the entire Scouting Legion was at risk as the Titan's closed in. A massive, 15 meter class Titan came charging in through the smoke towards the commander, only to be intercepted by Captain Levi, who leapt from his horse and dispatched the mindless horror with his 3D maneuver gear. A nearby rider was

snatched from his horse, and had his head bitten off by another Titan before anyone could react, and Hanji Zoe was thrown from her mount as it reared up in terror when another piece of flaming debris fell in front of her. She was soon lost amidst a swirling sea of dust and smoke as the screams of her comrades echoed all around her.

The entire operation was in jeopardy of falling apart at the seams, no one could have predicted that giant flaming chunks of metal would come raining down from the stars to wreak havoc upon the Scouting Legion below. Commander Erwin was desperately trying to rally the rest of the expedition, firing a green smoke flare to the north, signaling everyone to retreat. The order was immediately accompanied by the thundering of hooves as the entire legion fell into full retreat. Oddly enough, the Titans made no move to follow the retreating humans, they seemed more interested in the debris field as they milled about, devouring any survivors left stranded by their horses. Erwin Smith's face showed no hint of regret or remorse as he left the stragglers to their fate, and simply continued onwards with the rest of the legion as they rode hard for the Wall Rose.

\* \* \*

><p>Everything was dark and cold as the Master Chief struggled to pull himself back from black abyss around him, clenching his armored fist tightly. He bit back a groan of pain as he opened his eyes, attempting to sit up, only to find himself pinned beneath a couple of titanium plates. Shift forward, he braced a hand against the metal and shoved them off of him, sending the heavy slabs of scrap metal flying back a good half dozen yards as the Chief quickly got to his feet. The Spartan looked about, still slightly dazed from the trauma induced by his unconventional atmospheric reentry before spotting his MA5C assault rifle on the ground next to him. He immediately scooped it up, checking over the weapon to see if it was still in working condition. To his surprise the rifle's casing was only slightly scorched, and still in perfect working order. The durability of the MA5 series of rifles was legendary amongst the armed forces throughout its long 50 years of service with the UNSC, but surviving atmospheric reentry was something that even the most diehard marines would view as improbable, and would most likely chalk it up to luck.</p>

"Where are we?" The Master Chief asked Cortana as his HUD flickered slightly. "Checking coordinate impact data- \_We have asked you to give up your family, your childhood, your future.\_" Cortana replied strangely as the Chief's HUD went haywire. John shook his head, confused for a moment before yanking the AI's crystal data chip out of the back of his helmet. She took her human form, flickering wildly for a moment. "Cortanaâ€|" the Chief said, looking at her as Cortana shifted uncomfortably. "I'm sorry. It's the crash. I'm fine." She said as her friend continued to stare at her. "Something was wrong even before we left the \_Dawn\_." He replied as Cortana's form began to distort once more. "Chief, really, I'm fine." She said, her voice cutting out slightly. The Master Chief looked towards the ground. "Cortanaâ€|"

Cortana sighed sadly. "I was put into service eight years ago."

"Eight yearsâ€|"

"AIs deteriorate after seven, Chief."

John looked back at Cortana, as if alarmed. "Halsey." He said, his voice showing a tinge of desperation.

"Chiefâ€|"

"We need to find Halsey."

"Chief, please."

"She made you. She can fix you!"

"I won't recover from rampancy, Chief." Cortana said sadly as she gazed into the opaque golden visor that concealed her friend's face. John stood up straight, staring into Cortana's holographic eyes. "If we could just get back to Earth, and find Halsey, she could fix this." He said, his voice filled with clear, unshaken conviction that caused Cortana to falter for a moment.

"Don't make a girl a promise you can't keep."

Suddenly the Master Chief's motion tracker lit up as multiple large contacts began to zero in on his location. "Chief, we need to move, now!" Cortana said softly as the Chief nodded in response, heading towards a piece of wreckage from the *Forward Unto Dawn*'s hull. Half a second later, the first contact appeared in the Chief's vision, causing him to raise an eyebrow. A massive, bipedal form barred John's way as it towered over him. At 9 meters, the first image to cross the Chief's mind was that of a giant, but even then it didn't quite match up. The strange, twisted proportions and bulging potbelly of a gut should have made locomotion impossible for such a large creature, but it continued stomping towards the Master Chief, leering at him with its impossibly wide mouth. John took a step back, bringing his assault rifle to bear, training it on the creature's eyes before him. A split second later, it lunged seeking to wrap its finger's around the armored Spartan, only to find its hand closing around nothing but thin air as John leapt away. The Master Chief was no fool, and this clear act of aggression was all the cause he needed to fire off half his MA5C's 32 round magazine, hosing the creature's eyes with a hailstorm of 7.62x51mm FMJ rounds, causing it to clutch at its face in apparent agony where its eyes had once been as the Chief rolled away.

A woman's scream suddenly caught the Chief's attention as he whipped around, only to spot another deformed giant emerging from behind the *Dawn*'s wreckage. A small, human form lay shivering on the ground, back pedaling quickly as the giant bore down upon it, struggling with something at its waist. The Master Chief didn't even blink as he fired off another sustained burst from his MA5C, emptying the rest of the clip into the creature's face. The strange giant roared as it turned its attention to him, allowing the small humanoid it had been after to roll to safety as the Chief charged in, slamming a fresh mag into his rifle. The creature lunged as the first one did, like it actually expected to catch a SPARTAN-II off guard. The Master Chief easily leapt over its oncoming hand, coming down with enough force to break it's wrist as he ran up its arm before launching himself at its face with an M9 fragmentation grenade in his hand. With a grunt, the super solider primed the grenade and slammed his fist into the creature's eye as it roared before leaping to safety. Detonation came

half a second later as the creature's head viscerally exploded from within, showering the surrounding area with a rain of bloody skull fragments and brain matter as the Master Chief turned his attention to the humanoid form on the ground a dozen yards away from him.

\* \* \*

><p>Hanji Zoe gulped as the mysterious, green armored Titan turned its gaze towards her, its face an unreadable, opaque mirror of gold. She looked back at her ruined 3DMG, wishing for the hundredth time in the past hour that the technology hadn't been so easy to damage. Armed with only her two, razor sharp blades, she turned to face the oncoming Titan, only to find that it had already covered the distance between them in the three seconds that she had been cursing her luck. The woman took a step back from the towering monster and prepared for the inevitable, mind-numbingly fast attack that was to come. The Titan stopped, lowering the strange firearm it was wielding as it looked her up and down for a moment.</p>

\*\*\_"Are you alright?"\_\*\*

Zoe blinked rapidly as her eyes widened and her jaw dropped. Her swords hung limply at her sides as her arms seemed to turn to jelly. "Wh-what did you just say?" She breathed, hardly daring to believe what had just transpired. The Titan paused for a moment, as if thinking. "Are you alright?" it responded clearly in a deep, gravelly voice. Zoe felt her heart skip a beat as she collapsed onto her knees, beginning to laugh hysterically. "YOU CAN TALK!" She screamed, tears of excitement rolling down the sides of her cheeks as dug through her satchel, producing a leather bound journal and black fountain pen as she leapt to her feet. "What's your name? Where did you come from? Why does your kind eat humans?" She asked, bombarding the Titan in her quest to glean any information she could from this mysterious being. It placed a hand on her shoulder, pushing her away from it slightly, peering down at her. "Mamn, now's not the time to be asking me questions." It said, turning to glance over its shoulder at the Titans that were now stirring and glancing towards them. The green armored Titan seemed surprised that the smaller 7 meter class Titan had already regenerated most of its head as it shuffled towards them, leering menacingly.

"We need to move, now!" The Green Titan said, suddenly snatching Zoe by the wrist and dragging her over towards the wreckage. She fought against its grip for a moment before realizing the futility of her efforts. The being's hold was like that of a steel vice, and it was impossible for the woman to break free. Pausing near a strange looking contraption, the seemingly intelligent Titan released Zoe's wrist and bent over, flipping the machine over onto its black wheels. The researcher marveled at it for a moment before noticing that the Titan had already clambered into it, pressing a button. A hidden engine roared to life, causing Zoe to jump backwards, startled. The Titan nodded at her. "Get in on the other side; we need to make a break for it." It said calmly. Taking the creature's advice, Zoe leapt over the back of the machine and took her place next to the green giant as she clambered into the tailored black leather seat. The entire contraption began to move forward, shooting away from the other Titans as they ambled on in pursuit.

Zoe was dumbstruck at how fast the vehicle could move as it simply ate up the ground before them, going right over fallen trees and

small boulders. It outclassed the speed of any horse or Titan that she had ever seen as she watched the terrain race by, almost forgetting that there was a Titan driving the vehicle. Turning to face it, she opened up her journal once again and grinned. "What's your name?" She asked giddily, hoping that the creature would be more compliant now that they had successfully escaped. "That's Classified information" It responded, looking down at her. Zoe bit her lip, chewing on it for a second as she processed that information. "What can I call you then?" She asked, her glasses glinting sharply in the sunlight. The Titan momentarily turned its gaze back towards the front of the vehicle before giving the woman a cursory glance.

\*\*\*"Call me Master Chief"\*\*\*

#### 4. Chapter 3: The Steel Horse I Ride

\*\*On The Steel Horse I ride\*\*

\* \* \*

><p><strong>Unknown Forerunner Shield World â€“ 2557 A.D.<strong>

\* \* \*

><p>Master Chief Spartan Petty Officer John-117 was doing his best to keep the M12 Force Application Vehicle running at it's top speed of 78mph as it threw up a billowing cloud of dust behind it. The massive 4 wheel drive vehicle was affectionately called the "Warthog" by UNSC ground forces due to the over sized towing hooks at the front of the vehicle's bumper that gave it the illusion of having large tusks. The Warthog would be considered quite unwieldy for a novice marine or civilian driving it, but in the hands of a highly experienced operator like the Master Chief, the rugged M12 preformed like a dream, drifting around large boulders and crashing through thick shrubs and undergrowth alike at topspeed, leaving a trail of destruction in it's wake.

The Spartan was in his element as the Warthog continued to surge forward, cutting a foaming swath through a wide stream as it plunged onward, hardly slowed by the fast moving current as it roared up the other side of the bank and continued it's break pace into the unknown. The Chief's passenger was fairing rather differently as the vehicle hurtled over a fallen tree, bouncing on it's suspension as shattered branches and splinters of wood cascaded into the air. The woman held onto a handle dangling down from the metal beam that split the Warthog's interior into two compartments with a white knuckled grip while she desperately tried to hide her field journal behind her green cloak.

"\*\*Anata wa surÅ•daun shite kudasai koto wa dekimasu ka?\*\*\*\*!\*\*\*"  
She'd cry out as the M12 went over another log and she was forced to keep silent in order to avoid biting her tongue. The Master Chief grunted in response, though it was inaudible due to the ever present roar of the Warthog's Hydrogen-powered engine. He eased off the gas and the vehicle slowed down to 40/mph and the woman in the passenger seat breathed a sigh of relief. She pushed her glasses back into place from where they hung askew and attempted to wring some water out of her shirt as the Master Chief looked down at her from the

corner of his eye.

\* \* \*

><p>"It's impolite to stare at a lady you know." Cortana chirped, drawing the Chief's attention back to the road. "I wasn't staring" He said simply as he continued to drive. "Alright, then what were you doing?" She'd respond as the Master Chief maneuvered the Warthog away from a copse of trees. "I'm wondering what she's doing on a Forerunner installation." He grunted, shifting his vision back over to the woman who was now staring at him with rapt attention.</p>

The woman smiled at him and began speaking in her strange, yet somehow familiar language. "Hold on a moment Chief, translating..." Cortana said, as the unintelligible stream of words became English in nature once more. "Thanks for listening Master Chief." The woman would say, reaching once more for her pen and bringing her field journal out from behind her cloak. "Now, where was I?" She asked, tapping her chin thoughtfully with the end of her pen before opening her eyes wide and setting the tip of her fountain pen to paper. "Right, why did you save me back there? Are all Titans as intelligent as you are?

The Master Chief frowned slightly as the strange woman stared up at him, a great big smile plastered onto her face. "Cortana, what language is she speaking?" He asked returning his gaze to the terrain ahead. "She's speaking modern Japanese. Luckily I've been programmed with every language known to man so I can serve as a translator, otherwise you wouldn't have been able to speak to her in the first place." Cortana would reply as the Chief frowned inwardly. "Perhaps she's the survivor of an accident..." John said as he looked over at the strange woman once more as she stared at him. "Perhaps, but we have little evidence at this conjecture, let's play along with her and hopefully get some answers." the AI advised, causing the Chief to sigh. This was going to be a long trip...

\* \* \*

><p>Hanji Zoe kept smiling at the Master Chief as she finished her description of him in the field journal and began to draw a rough sketch of him with a piece of charcoal she kept in her knapsack. His armor was beginning to take it's final shape when the Titan turned to face her, staring at her from behind the solid gold visor he wore. "What is your name?" He asked in a deep, gravelly voice that immediately grabbed her attention. Hanji fumbled around with her journal, flipping to a fresh page and recording his question on paper before flashing a charming grin at him. "My name is Hanji Zoe," She said, writing her own response down underneath the Chief's question. "I'm a member of the Scouting Legion." The Chief grunted softly in reply. "Is the Scouting Legion a military organization?" He would ask, pushing his foot down a little as the vehicle accelerated. Hanji nodded, making another note in her journal. "Yes we are, do Titans have military organizations as well?" she asked, wondering if she had made any headway with the Master Chief. The Titan remained silent for a moment, continuing to drive. </p>

"Titans?" The Chief asked, the slight increase in pitch at the tail end of the word 'Titan' leaving Hanji without a doubt that this was another question. "That's what we call your kind. It's because you're so large." Hanji replied as she frowned, marking his question down.

"I'm a Spartan, not a Titan." The Chief said, jerking the wheel sharply to the side and causing the entire vehicle to swerve sharply to the left. Hanji, surprised by the sudden sharp turn dropped her pen and held onto the rung hanging down central bar spanning the across the back of the contraption to the front.

"What was that for?!" She shouted, quite annoyed, only to have her angry growl catch in her throat as she almost came face to face with a large 7 meter class Titan that had leaped from a copse of trees where it had lain in ambush. It's disheveled mat of black hair was tangled with an assortment of twigs and pine needles as it snapped it's monstrous jaws shut with a resounding "crack!" that tore through the air, sending shivers up Hanji's spine as the horrifying mockery of humanity missed by a few yards as the Master Chief sent the vehicle hurtling around it and accelerated as the Titan moved to give chase, surging forward on it's splayed arms and legs like some grotesque giant spider as it surged forwards.

\* \* \*

><p>The Master Chief calmly sent the Warthog into a power slide as the creature roared past, missing the vehicle by a few yards once again as it threw itself around with reckless abandon, attempting to stop the speeding M12. "What have you got for me Cortana?" The Chief barked, analyzing the creature's movement patterns as it attempted to intercept them. "I'm not sure, it seems quite similar to the creatures that we faced when we crashed, but it's movements are more akin to a lizard's. One thing's for sure though, this creature isn't natural by any means." Cortana chirped as the Master Chief continued his evasive maneuvers.</p>

The Spartan gunned the throttle, drifting around a piece of the Forward Unto Dawn's hull, breaking the monstrosity's line of sight as he did so, racing out the other side. The ugly creature found it difficult to pull the same sharp turn as it broke in it's stride and attempted to gallop after the Warthog once more. "He's not very bright, is he?" Cortana said, giggling as she watched the monster surge forward, making a beeline for the fleeing humans. "Let's give him something to think about." The Chief said as he gradually decelerated.

The creature continued it's pursuit, dead set on catching the Warthog as it shot past. Seeing it was beginning to close the gap between it and it's prey, the monstrosity bunched up on its hind legs and pounced forward like a cat, jaws opened wide. But whatever primordial intelligence that was driving the creature forward had grossly miscalculated the timed acceleration of an experienced Warthog driver and missed by over a dozen yards as the vehicle shot away at top speed, leaving the creature behind in a cloud of dust as it rapidly disappeared over the horizon.

\* \* \*

><p>The Master Chief turned to his passenger, who seemed to be relieved that the danger had passed. "What was that *thing*?" He asked, easing off the throttle as the Warthog slowed down to a more comfortable speed. Hanji looked at the Spartan with genuine surprise. "That was a Titan, like you!" She said, looking around for her pen, only to give a cry of alarm when she couldn't find it. "My pen! Have you seen my pen?! It's my favorite!"

"I don't care about your pen!" The Chief barked, somewhat irritated by Hanji's mixed priorities as she continued her frantic search. "Tell me everything you know about these 'Titans'" That got Hanji's attention as she stared at the massive, armored form next to her. "I'm afraid I can't tell you. It would jeopardize the survival of human kind." She said simply, setting her lips in a tight, determined line as she gazed up into John's visor with unwavering conviction. "If you saved me just to learn what we understand about your kind, then you can kill me right now. I won't betray my own people!"

The Master Chief frowned inwardly once again. This whole spiel made no sense to him at the moment. "You think I'm one of those...Titans?" He asked, turning his attention back to what was in front of the Warthog as he made sure to avoid any more copses of trees. "Are you meaning to tell me that you aren't?" Hanji asked statistically. "I told you, I'm a Spartan." The Chief replied simply, looking back down at Hanji. The brown harried woman didn't respond for a moment as she slowly let her right hand creep down towards the sheathed sword on her hip. "I wouldn't do that if I were you..." The Master Chief growled. "Attempting to harm a Spartan is a crime punishable by death under UNSC Martial Law."

Hanji stopped reaching for her weapon, her glasses glazing over in the setting sunlight. "UNSC? What are you going on about?" She said, slowly allowing her hand to fall away from the hilt of her sword. That caught the Master Chief by surprise, but he concealed his confusion immediately to focus at the task at hand. "The United Nations Space Command, you haven't heard of it?" Hanji shook her head, frowning as she fumbled around for another pen in her knapsack.

"That explains a lot..." Cortana said, drawing the Chief's attention back to her. "We've got more questions than answers here Cortana" The Chief replied, before suddenly slamming on the breaks. Hanji yelped, ink splashing all over her paper as the vehicle stopped. "No! Damn it, there goes my observations!" the woman cried out, turning to throw a baleful glare in the Spartan's direction as he quickly exited the Warthog. Hanji ambled out after him as the armored soldier strode forward with a purpose towards an odd looking shape a few meters away, partially hidden in the scrub.

\* \* \*

><p>Hanji frowned, standing off to the Spartan's side as he bent over and dragged a massive green container out of the bushes, it's metal case groaning in protest. The Chief bent down to examine it, apparently searching for something. "What's inside of this thing?" Hanji would ask, reaching for her spare journal inside of her cloak. The Master Chief didn't answer her, instead opting to crack it open as he smashed a thin panel with his armored green fist. The box popped open, scattering strange looking, metallic firearms all over the ground. "This..." The Chief said, turning around to face her. "Is UNSC property" The Spartan pointed to a black emblem painted onto the crate. The large, black eagle clutching a banner with the letters U.N.S.C blazoned upon it immediately grabbed her attention. The heavily armored humanoid bent down and scooped up a firearm from the crate, looking it over before reaching for it's black fore grip and pulling it back towards him, then forward once more with a satisfying "tchuk-tchuk". </p>

"What is this thing?" Hanji would ask, bending over to get a closer look at the weapon. The Master Chief didn't respond, rather he tapped the side of his helmet before picking up a few more of the strange guns and bundling them in his arms before walking back towards the parked vehicle. They all looked like the same model of weapon, and she could make out a string of numbers and letters on a stock when she picked one up. It read as 'M90 CAWS', and Hanji scratched her head. "Hey Chief, what do these random numbers mean?" She asked, looking up at the Spartan inquisitively, all signs of her previous aggression now gone. The Spartan glanced over at her before suddenly snatching the source of her curiosity away. "Not something you should be playing with..." He said, his gravelly voice rather devoid of emotion. Hanji pouted, bending over to pick up another weapon at her feet. "Leave it..." the Chief said without even looking at the woman as he loaded up the remaining guns into the metal contraption that they had driven in on. Hanji gave a frustrated sigh, accepting defeat as she clambered back into the vehicle.

"Here, hold this" The Master Chief said, roughly forcing a rectangular, metallic box into Hanji's hands. She looked up at him questioningly, but his opaque visor made reading any expression that he may have had on his face an impossible endeavor. "Don't open it" He said warningly before placing two more boxes at her feet. Hanji sighed, looking the case over as the engine roared to life once more, causing the vehicle to lurch forwards once more and set off towards the setting sun. Hanji peered more closely at the heavy box that lay perched in her lap, running her fingers over the cool, angled surface.. '\*\*Soelkraft 8 Gauge 3.5 Magnum' \*\*jumped out at her in bright, yellow lettering as she gawked. Picking up her charcoal she quickly made a sketch of the box, marking the letters and numbers in ink with her pen before snapping the book shut as they continued their journey.

\* \* \*

><p>The Master Chief kept the Warthog at top speed, cruising at 78mph as the fuel gauge began to drop steadily. They had already crossed several hundred miles, and if they didn't refuel soon he and Hanji would be stranded. Luckily the Warthog was equipped with several full fuel canisters, so finding more wouldn't be an issue. However, the time spent refueling would leave the pair vulnerable to attack, and while Hanji was human, he sure as hell wasn't comfortable with a stranger watching his back.

He scanned the horizon for a moment, and immediately drew his eyes to a tall hill, devoid of any foliage for several hundred yards on all sides. He turned the Warthog to the right and began to climb up the grassy slope, keeping Hanji in his peripheral vision. The woman looked at him curiously as they scaled the hill, her hands poised over her journal with pen at the ready. "What are we doing? Shouldn't we be heading further north?" she'd ask, pointing to a point on the compass she carried. The Master Chief simply grunted. "You'll see..."

\* \* \*

><p>Hanji smiled happily, relief flooding through her as she gazed upon the Wall Rose off in the distance, now only a few miles away. She looked back to the Spartan who was refilling the 'fuel tank' on

the Warthog, and she smiled ruefully. The Master Chief had been forced to elaborate on the name of the vehicle when he asked her to stay in her seat. The name was deep and almost guttural in her accent, but she managed to pronounce it several times in conversation without needing to correct herself. <p>

With a content yawn she'd clasp her hands together, lifting her arms high over her head to pop her elbows and relieve the crick in her neck that she had developed during the rough journey. With a sigh she'd turn her eyes to the blue sky above, content to rest for this brief moment of peace as the clouds raced overhead, unaffected by gravity's meager pull and the wind caressed her cheek, slowly but surely beginning to lull her to sleep.

A loud, rumbling crash of thunder cut through the silence, shattering it and jolting Hanji out of her drowsy state, almost slamming her head into the dash board. To her surprise, the Master Chief was already on the move, starting up the engine as he vaulted over the back of the Warthog and into the drivers seat with the grace of a cat. "What was that?" Hanji would ask, scanning around them before looking ahead. An ice cold bead of dread dropped into her gut, sending an electrical charge up her spine. Smoke was rising from the Wall Rose, swaddling the towering form of a nightmare in it's dark clutches.

The Colossal Titan had appeared once again for the first time in over four years, and it was already poised to attack, bringing it's foot back and swinging forwards, slowly gaining speed before smashing through the only gatehouse for miles around. The crash resounded for miles around, reaching Hanji's ears as a sharp, rumbling 'crack' as the masonry was torn asunder. The woman's heart sank as she heard the screams of her fellow human beings as the Titan suddenly vanished in a cloud of smoke, just as it had all those years ago.

The Master Chief looked over at Hanji for a moment as she gazed open mouthed at the scene. Several dozen titans had already poured through the gap in the wall, and it would only be a matter of time before the Armored Titan showed itself once more to drive them all the way back to the Wall Sina, humanity's last line of defense against the titan onslaught. The woman turned to the Master Chief with haunted eyes as her tongue stuck to the roof of her mouth.

\*\*"The Titans have breached Wall Rose"\*\*

## 5. Chapter 4: Battle of Trost: First Wave

\*\* Hello everyone, sorry for the long wait. I spent all evening finishing it up, and I'd like to thank lostsoldierS636 for his assistance on the matter. He got back with me pretty quickly and helped me space out the text so it hopefully becomes less of a headache to read. As for my other Beta readers, I apologize for not getting the second half of this chapter to you to review, I just had a burst of creative inspiration and couldn't stop writing. \*\*

\*\*2 things however should be addressed.\*\*

\*\*A lot of people have commented on the fact that Hanji and everyone in the AoT world are speaking Japanese. I have my own reasoning for that, since Requiem is not Earth it is not effected by the

geographical boundaries of Earth. If anyone reads into information on the Forerunners, you'd know that they reseeded worlds after firing the Halo array so life could continue. With that said, they would trouble populating Requiem with humans and earth creatures, especially if it's out of spite for the Diadact. In regards to them speaking Japanese, it's the language in which the Manga was written and the Anime voiced in. Just because you have German Architecture and names doesn't mean they can't speak another language, especially since this is not Earth that they're living on.\*\*

\*\*In regards to questions about whether or not the UNSC or Storm Covenant will show up, my answer to both of them is yes, I fully plan on having the Chief fighting Covie bastards alongside ground teams from the UNSC \*\*\*\*\_Infinity\_\*\*\*\*. But not yet, you'll have to wait until the Battle of Trost reaches it's conclusion.\*\*

\*\*And now, without further ado, onto the story!\*\*

\* \* \*

><p><strong>The Battle of Trost: First Wave<strong>

\* \* \*

><p><strong>Town of Trost: Wall Rose â€“ Year 850<strong>

\* \* \*

><p>It was a special day for little Eliza Hawthorne when the sun broke over the horizon at dawn. The little girl yawned and stretched, letting her copper curls fall over her shoulders as she blinked the grit of sleep out of her eyes to greet the first light of a new day. Her lethargy vanished as she leapt out of bed, giggling childishly with glee.<p>

"It's my birthday! Yahoo!" She'd cry out, pumping her fist into the air excitedly as her door slowly creaked open to admit her mother. Cara Hawthorne was a comely young woman with the same fiery curls as her daughter, and her tired smile emanated warmth at the sight of her ecstatic daughter.

"Happy Birthday my dear!" She'd say holding out a small parcel wrapped in old newspaper.

"It's not every day that you turn six years old, I hope you like it." Eliza snatched the package eagerly, tearing the old newspaper to shreds and revealing the soft, fluffy brown fabric beneath.

The little girl grinned and pulled a small stuffed bear out of mess, hugging it eagerly to her chest.

"Thanks momâ€|where's dad?" She'd ask, looking around for her father.

>Cara frowned, gently taking her daughter's free hand into her own. "Daddy had to work today, I'm sorry Eliza. He wanted to be here, but the Garrison needs him."<p>

Eliza cast her eyes to the ground, fighting the urge to cry.

"I-I understandâ€|I just wanted him to be hereâ€|" She'd say,

sniffling loudly and wiping moisture from her eyes.

>Her mother crouched down to embrace her, sweeping her up in her arms. "I know dear, I knowâ€|" <p>

Breakfast that morning was nothing special, just half a loaf of bread and a single egg for both mother and daughter all washed down with cold water. The sun was rising over the Wall Rose now, bathing the town of Trost in the cool morning light. Eliza poked at her food, seemingly disinterested in eating as her mother got up to put her dish in the wash bin. Looking back over at her daughter, Cara would sigh, gently patting the sad young girl on the head.

"There there sweetie, I'm sure daddy will be home before lunch." She said soothingly.

Her daughter glared up reproachfully at her. "That's what you always say." She growled, heaving a sigh of frustration.

Cara frowned, sitting down beside her daughter in a creaking old chair.

>"Daddy has to protect everyone you know, he's a guardsman after all, he can't just take off from work when his boss wants him there." She said, pulling her daughter into her soft bosom.<p>

"But nothing ever happens around here!" Eliza shouted, her voice muffled in her mother's chest.

Cara continued to hug her daughter earnestly, gently caressing the top of her head with her free hand. "I hope it remains that way, I really do. The last time something happened is when the Wall Maria fellâ€|"

There was a loud knock at the door and Cara released her daughter from her loving embrace. Smoothing down her apron, she hurried over to the door and cracked it open. A small form greeted her eyes, waving shyly at her.

"Helloâ€|is Lizzy home?" the child asked, looking around as if unsure how to proceed. Cara smiled and opened the door wide to admit the bewildered youngling who immediately locked eyes with Eliza who sat at the table. Eliza's brooding face broke into a broad smile at the sight of her friend.

"Hello there Isaac, how are you?" She'd ask, hopping down from the chair and running over to the black haired boy. He blushed shyly at her and motioned outside.

"Uh, I-I remembered it was your birthday today soâ€|" Isaac said awkwardly, pointing outside. Eliza smiled warmly at him.

"Oh, so you wanted to go out and play?" She asked, giggling before looking up at her mother.

"Can I go play with Isaac?" She'd ask pleadingly, attempting to give her mom the best puppy dog look that she could.

Cara laughed loudly, her sides splitting with mirth. "Ahaha! S-sure dear, whatever you want! Ahoohooohoo!"

Eliza pumped her fist in the air and did a little victory dance

before seizing ahold of Isaac's hand and forcefully began to drag him outside with her.

The young pair of giggling kids played outside for the better part of the late morning hours and well into the early ones of the afternoon, only stopping to return to Eliza's house for a couple of sweet buns made specifically for Eliza on her birthday. Biting deep into the honey glazed bread; Eliza and Isaac were unaware of several sets of cold eyes glaring at them from the darkness of a nearby alleyway. The first sign of what was to come came in the form of a small stone that smacked into the side of Eliza's cheek from where it had been hurled. Giving a startled cry she'd reach up to touch her smarting cheek, wincing as she pulled her hand away to find blood sticking to her fingers from the jagged cut that the sharp rock had inflicted.

"Hey look girls; it's the little whiny snitch! Aww, what's wrong, you trip over your ugly face?" Eliza cried out in fury as a small gang of children came out of hiding, led by a tall young blonde with a nasty smirk on her face.

"Why did you throw that rock at me Gretchen?!" She yelped, shielding her face as a stick came hurtling past her, striking Isaac in the chest. Gretchen snarled at her, picking up another stone from the ground and bouncing it up and down in her palm.

"You just had to run to your stupid daddy, didn't you? You're the reason why my parents beat me!" She said, snarling as she chucked the jagged rock at her victim. It fell just a few inches short, kicking up a small cloud of dust where it impacted the dry ground and fractured into multiple smaller fragments.

Eliza stood up, snatching the wooden sword that Isaac had been carrying around for the better part of the day.

"Leave us alone! You were stealing!" Eliza shouted, wincing as another stone glanced off of her shoulder. Gretchen was positively fuming.

"You could have just looked the other way! My family needed that food!" She said, advancing on the younger girl with the fires of her rage burning brightly in her amber eyes.

Eliza took several steps back, adopting a sloppy stance with the hardwood sword held out in front of her with a two handed grip. Her knees were shaking and Eliza couldn't keep the dread out of her voice. "P-please, just go away!" She pleaded, lowering the tip of the sword for a moment, and that's when the first strike came. Another kid had snuck up on her from the side and struck her in the face with a supple branch. The blow stung like a whip as the soft green wood drew a nasty welt across her cheek. Before she could even react she felt a fist connecting with her gut, knocking the wind out of her lungs and propelling her to the ground. Gretchen was on top of her in a flash, raising her fist to continue the assault upon her helpless victim. It was in that moment as the furious blonde brought her hand down to crash against Eliza's nose that all hell broke loose.

There was a loud explosion followed by screams of terror as chunks of masonry flew through the air, crashing into rows of houses. A fragment of stone collided with Gretchen's temple, rendering her unconscious as she keeled over. Eliza opened her eyes, blinking away

tears of pain as her ears rang, looking up at the clear blue sky overhead.

'What's going on?' She thought as the other children fled, leaving their fallen leader in the dust.

"L-Lizzy! Come on, get up! They're coming!" She heard Isaac say as he tugged at her arm, attempting to drag her away from the scene.

'Who's coming?' She wondered, slowly getting to her feet and dusting herself off. As she turned to look at her friend Eliza froze, her eyes locking on to the monstrous form that was peering over the wall. The terrifying, skinless face of the Colossal Titan greeted her eyes like something out of her darkest nightmares. She hadn't even registered the fact that she was screaming until Isaac clamped his dusty hand over her mouth in an attempt to silence her.

"Come on! We need to run!" He cried out, yanking at her wrist and attempting to drag her away from the horror they had witnessed. Eliza complied numbly, feeling only the buzz of adrenaline crackling over her pale skin like lightning as her legs pumped beneath her, unaware that she was leaving her bully behind to a most horrible fate as the first Titans made it through the broken gates of the Wall Rose, intent on seeking out their prey.

\* \* \*

><p><strong>On approach to the Wall Rose; Unknown Forerunner Shield World â€“ 2557 A.D.<strong>

\* \* \*

><p>The Master Chief gunned the throttle, taking the M12 FAV from zero to forty in two and a half seconds, causing the vehicle to clear the steep drop of the northern facing slope of the hill with ease. Hanji opened her mouth to scream as the Warthog entered freefall, its suspension expanding out to 36 inches in the air without the impressive weight of the vehicle's three ton frame to keep it in check. The impact when it occurred was far less jarring and lethal than she had expected as the suspension compressed down to its original one foot of clearance, absorbing most of the impact as the Master Chief floored it, ramping up to top speed in little under three seconds, leaving a massive cloud of dust in the wake of the armored vehicle as it tore off in the direction of the Wall Rose, appearing to be nothing more dull green blur as the deep throated roar of the engine resounded ahead of them.<p>

"Cortana, what's our ETA?" The Chief asked, switching off his helmet's external speakers. The UNSC smart AI's avatar appeared in his HUD in the top right corner and flagged the broken down gate with a blue diamond.

"We should arrive in approximately 2 minutes and 18 seconds Chief, provided that something doesn't slow us down." Cortana replied, holding two fingers up to her temple.

The Spartan grunted in response. "That might be a bit of a problem, it looks as though a large number of those creatures are amassing at the gate."

Cortana frowned, analyzing the data for half a nanosecond before coming up with a different route. "Alright Chief, if you can maintain this speed you should easily be able to avoid those hostiles. They don't seem to possess the ability to think ahead and will probably attempt to chase after you like a pack of fools."

The Chief frowned inwardly and thought on the plan for half a second, his keen mind searching for any flaws. "That might draw them through the gates Cortana." He said, continuing to maintain the Warthog's breakneck speed as it glided over the rough ground beneath its massive wheels.

"They're headed through them already Chief, it's the only way in short of flying." Cortana said, causing the waypoint to blink rapidly for a few moments. "Maintain your current course Spartan."

The M12 continued onwards, shooting past Titans of varying sizes as it proceeded onwards towards the destroyed gate, leaving its ambling pursuers in the rising trail of dust in its wake. Hanji Zoe gripped the hand hold hanging down between her and the Master Chief, doing her best to calm her racing heart as the Warthog sped past group after group of incoming Titans, narrowly avoiding a few that had decided to dive after the racing vehicle, but it was trying to catch smoke with your bare hands, and all they got were blades of grass and grit in-between their monstrous jaws where the M12 had once been. As they got closer and closer to the gate it became increasingly difficult to dodge the large numbers to Titans that were literally throwing themselves at the armored vehicle in an attempt to capture the two humans within. Right as they were about to pass through the destroyed gatehouse a large, 10 meter class titan threw it's arm out in front of the Warthog's path. Without any room to maneuver the Master Chief simply braced for impact as the 3 ton jeep collided with the outstretched appendage. There was a sickening crunch and hot blood splattered all over the windshield as the Warthog caught the beast in the forearm, ripping it off completely at the elbow. The mangled limb crashed into the dust behind the bloody piece of machinery as it sped off down the cobblestone street and into the town of Trost.

\* \* \*

><p><strong>(This scene was inspired by this picture drawn by Chalii from deviant art. artAttack-On-Titan-371314013 )\*\*

\* \* \*

><p>Eliza and Isaac clutched one another tightly as blood curdling screams of agony and terror echoed in the streets outside. The two young children had ducked into a nearby inn as its patrons and owner had fled. Cut off from the end of the street debris, they unwittingly ran straight into the waiting jaws of the Titan horde. None survived, and the streets ran red with human blood and was soon littered dismembered body parts. The young pair couldn't bring themselves to watch the carnage outside and clung to one another behind a blind spot between two windows on the second story of the Inn. A feral cry of terror was cut short by a loud, sickening crunch as the one of the windows was suddenly stained a gory red. Eliza couldn't stop herself from emitting a single, ear-piercing shriek from witnessing the change in lighting. Isaac clamped a hand over her mouth, trying to

keep his own teeth from chattering as several long seconds passed. After what felt like an eternity he gently let his hand fall from his friend's lips and breathed a sigh of relief. It seemed that the danger had passed.<p>

A dark shadow suddenly cast itself through the window, blocking out any and all light that attempted to pass through the glass panes. Both Eliza and Isaac held their breaths as their blood turned to ice water in their veins. A cold wave of fear washed over them, racing up their spines and setting their teeth on edge. Their hearts pounded in their chests, seemingly shattering the silence with every beat. Eliza looked over at Isaac, her eyes wide and staring as she reached out to touch his hand. The glass shattered, and a massive, grasping appendage seized Eliza by the waist, ripping her out of the second story window and into the carnage outside.

Eliza screamed, overcome with sheer and utter gut wrenching terror. Tears clouded her eyes and her face grew pale as she kicked, writhed and bit in the Titan's grasp, attempting to break free. But it was no use, the Titan had a grip like a steel vice and it bore her aloft, fixing her with its terrible, feral eyes. The skin of its palms felt like pavement on a hot summer's day, and Eliza felt as though she had been forced into a pressure cooker as the Titan brought her ever closer to its leering maw. The terrible jaws opened wide, blasting steam into the young victim's face as she stared wide eyed, now completely paralyzed with fear as she gazed into that dark, blistering hot gateway to hell that opened before her behind rows of white enamel tombstones. In the back of her mind she was dimly aware of a far off buzzing that slowly began to increase in volume as the Titan brought her closer and closer to meet with its kiss of death, but all she could do was utter one final scream as the guitoune that was the monster's jaws raced forward to cut the thread of her life short before it had even begun.

There was a loud, resounding crash as the Titan's jaws slammed shut, spraying Eliza with a stinging, crimson red spray as a white lance of pure agony shot up her left arm. Her mind went numb as she reached up to touch her face, only to come face to face with the bloodied stump she had once called a forearm. She blinked once, then twice before she felt herself begin to fall backwards towards the ground below.

\_ 'What just happened? Am I dead?' \_ she thought to herself as the wind rushed through her hair and screamed in her ears. In her adrenaline charged state she faintly registered the fact that the Titan's entire face appeared to have been caved in, leaving shards of bone falling from its skull where the brow ridge used to be as her vision blackened, allowing her to slip into the blissful oblivion that was the subconscious mind.

\* \* \*

><p>Hanji Zoe would have been thrown through the Warthog's windshield had she not braced herself for impact the moment the M12 had mounted a ramp of debris with it's all terrain-all weather attitude, racing up the slope as though it were nothing more than a smooth hill. It shot off the makeshift ramp at over 50mph, straight at the face of a 10 meter class Titan that stood in its way. The resulting crash resulted in the vehicle's 3 ton frame completely obliterating the upper portion of the Titan's face with its grill and massive front

mounted tow hooks.

The creature had been stupid enough to look up when it heard the armored vehicle's approach, and was now sightless and teetering on its spindly limbs. Hanji swore that she heard the scream of a child right before the jarring impact, but wrote it off at the moment as she struggled to re-position her glasses from where they hung crooked on her face. She glanced up at the Titan as it finally fell backwards, releasing its hold on whatever victim it had restrained, allowing whoever it was to plummet earthwards to their inevitable demise.

The Master Chief with his enhanced perception forged by his intensive training and the fires of war saw Eliza's falling form, her little white dress rippling in the wind as she plummeted to the ground like an injured swan, doomed to die before her time if someone didn't act immediately. Spartan Time kicked into overdrive as the veteran Spartan Commando felt something deep and unfamiliar emerge from deep within his psyche. A long dormant instinct overtook him as he hurled himself at the falling girl, snatching her up in his arms and clutched her to the dull drab metal of his chest plate as he alighted on the ground with an unnatural, catlike grace. The Chief frowned inwardly as he gazed down into the innocent, blood flecked face of Eliza, cradling her in his arms. A brief feeling of relief passed over him as John shook the Cave Man from his system, forcing the primal urge to clasp the tiny child harder against his armored torso receded into obscurity once more.

"Chief! We're surrounded! Snap out of it!" Cortana barked, bringing the Master Chief back to reality once more.

Cortana's information as always was accurate. Two four meter class Titans, a seven meter and the rapidly recovering 10 meter titan were ambling towards the Spartan at an alarming speed. He dropped the unconscious girl into Hanji's arms as she stared at him, still seemingly amazed by his reaction speed when he caught the falling child. "Keep her safe, I'll deal with these things." The Chief growled, reaching over his shoulder to demagnetize the M90 Shotgun from its position on his back, bringing it to bear towards the oncoming Titans.

\_\***KABOOM!**\*\*\_

The first blast of 8 gauge magnum smashed into a 4 meter class Titan's face as it lunged at the lone Spartan, swatting it out of the air like it was nothing more than a fly as its head was blown to bits, showering the blood soaked cobblestones with bits of bone and grey matter in a thick gory paste. John pumped another shell into the chamber, popping the expended hull out of the feed mechanism. Then the 7 meter class attempted to swipe at him, seeking to snatch the Spartan up in its powerful grip so it could bring its massive jaws to bear. John nimbly avoided its grasping hands, pumping three rounds into its face as he strafed to the side, seeking to keep all of his adversaries focused on him and him alone as Hanji snuck into the remains of the ruined inn.

The Chief's ploy worked as the three remaining Titans took no notice of the fleeing Scouting Legion member, instead opting to deal with the more obvious threat that the Master Chief had proved to present. The 7 meter class was feeling around for the Chief, its eyes a

sightless mess of gore where the Soelkraft 8 gauge shells had done their bloody work. John took a moment to reload his weapon during the temporary lull as the other Titan's slowly crept forwards.

"Chief, be careful. They might be giant mindless zombies, but they can certainly take a beating." Cortana chirped as John popped the final shell into the chamber and cocked the M90, grunting in acknowledgement as the Titans advanced.

The Chief suddenly felt an arm wrap around his upper torso as the fallen 4 meter class Titan finished regenerating its jaws. Before he could react it sank its newly formed teeth into the side of his neck, seeking to rip the Spartan's head from his shoulders. The Chief barely felt the pressure delivered by the Titan's jowls, his neck protected by the MJOLNIR's protective titanium weave undersuit as he seized the Titan by the back of its own neck, spearing his fingers through its flesh like daggers as they wrapped around the base of its spine, crushing it in his grip. With a grunt the Chief shifted his weight forwards, throwing the massive creature over his shoulder and into the path of the other 4 meter class titan, pinning it down beneath its brother as the 10 meter class attempted to try its luck, narrowly missing the Spartan as he leaped out of the way.

The large Titan pressed forwards, seeking to snatch the annoying armored human off of the ground. Its long arm snaked out, hand held wide with fingers splayed to act like a net. It might as well have been trying to snatch a mosquito out of the air with a pair of tweezers as the Master Chief danced out of reach before launching a devastating counter attack, charging forwards and smashing his armored fist into the Titan's bony ankle. It crumpled like tin foil as the Chief's punch shattered the ball joint, causing the Titan to fall forwards as its ankle completely collapsed under its weight. The Spartan easily sidestepped the gargantuan falling body as it crashed into the ground, kicking up a massive cloud of dust around it.

"Chief! Go for the nape of the neck!" Hanji cried, waving her hands from the second story of the ruined inn.

John grunted in acknowledgment, deftly leaping a full ten feet into the air to land upon the fallen Titan's back as it stirred, slowly attempting to prop itself up. The Chief didn't give it the chance as he ran up its spine before perching himself at the base of the Titan's neck with his legs spread, pumping shell after shell into the Titan's only vital area. Boiling hot blood splattered all over his MJOLNIR VI, raising a bloody mist around him as the destructive power of the M90's 8 gauge shells vaporized the Titan's neck. The creature shuddered once before its arms collapsed beneath it with a mighty crash before lying eerily still, never to rise again.

The Master Chief turned to face his final opponent, the 7 meter class Titan that was bunching up on its haunches in preparation to hurl itself at its foe. The monster's freakishly huge head looked like something out of African folklore, its face covered in blood and shards of bone as it glared at the Master Chief with newly regenerated eyes, oblivious to everything else. There was the sound of a piton dart firing, and two long black cables embedded themselves in the sides of two building, heralding the arrival of a new combatant. Death arrived upon steel wings as two razor sharp blades bit deep into the back of the Titan's neck, carving a bloody chunk of

meat away from its spine. The Titan was dead before it even knew what had happened, collapsing into a heap as its flesh began to burn away.

\* \* \*

><p>Hannes feared that he had arrived too late to save whatever civilians had been cut off from the street by the debris of collapsed houses when he had heard the first gunshot. Adjusting his course he broke away from the rest of his squad who were in the process of helping civilians evacuate the district. After the second and third shots however, his fears began to worsen.</p>

"They must have an entire squad of the Military Police pinned down!" Hannes swore, cursing his luck. "Might as well see what I can do!"

The scene of the carnage would be engraved in his memory to the end of his days. Three Titans lay dead, scattered around the stone courtyard with a fourth, smaller Titan pinned beneath its decaying compatriot. Blood was everywhere, as well as human body parts that all too clearly belonged to civilians. But standing upon the corpse of the largest Titan in the sea of gore was an armored soldier the likes of which he had never seen before. The massive figure's green attire was absolutely drenched in steaming Titan blood and bits of meat and bone, seemingly unfazed by the destruction around it. The figure turned to face Hannes as the sun's rays glanced off the red mist, painting a bloody halo behind the armored foe as it dropped off the edge of the decaying Titan corpse into a puddle of gore, slowly walking forwards through the brutality like some ancient god of war.

Hannes gripped his blades tighter as the soldier walked towards him, showing no sign of concern that an armed member of the Garrison stood before him.

"That's far enough!" Hannes barked, struggling to keep a tremor of fear out of his voice.

The soldier stopped, gazing at the man standing before it.

"You're standing in my way" Came a deep, gravelly voice that seemed to rumble in the tension laced silence.

Hannes felt a cold bead of sweat roll down the side of his face as he leaned forwards a bit, adopting a defensive stance as the armored figure began moving towards him once more.

"S-stop! I'm warning you! Don't come any closer!" Hannes growled, attempting to swallow his fear as the soldier continued on his way, paying no heed to the blades within the Garrison member's hands.

Things might have taken a dive for the worse if Hanji hadn't run up behind the Master Chief, clutching the wounded Eliza in her arms with Isaac hot on her heels.

"Wait, stop!" She'd call out, panting for breath as she pulled up alongside the Master Chief.

"He's with me!" Hanji said, placing a hand on the Chief's shoulder.

Hannes breathed a sigh of relief, sheathing his swords at his sides. "Who are you?" He asked, looking the four up and down.

"Hanji Zoe of the Scouting Legion, this here is the Master Chief, and these two are Lizzy and Isaac" Hanji said, gently running her fingers through Eliza's coppery curls, now matted with dirt and blood.

Hannes felt a lump form in his throat at the sight of Eliza's missing forearm, neatly bandaged but still leaking profusely through the white cotton of the bandage. The Master Chief too seemed to notice this for the first time and pushed past Hannes, running over towards the over turned Warthog. He returned with a strange looking green canister with what looked like a narrow nozzle attached to it.

Without giving any further explanation the Chief unwrapped Eliza's bandaged arm, exposing the bloody stump. The bite had luckily been rather clean, with little in the way of splinters from her missing forearm to complicate things. He gently pressed the nozzle against the wound and pulled the trigger. A jet of yellowish foam shot forth from the opening, encasing the stump in it. John waited a moment for the foam to harden slightly before wrapping a clean bandage around the girl's arm with the expertise of a medic in the field.

A pair of startling blue eyes flickered open, staring up into the bloodied, golden visor of the Master Chief. Eliza groaned softly, shifting in the Spartan's grip. She blinked for a moment or two, reaching up to brush the side of John's helmet with her fingers, as if she couldn't decide if he was real or not. When her fingers made contact with the lukewarm metal she frowned.

"Who are you?" She croaked, her throat feeling raw from her trials.

John felt the strange emotion well up inside of him once more, and he fought to suppress it as he gently stroked her hair.

"Call me Master Chief" He said, and Eliza smiled softly before settling back into his arms, her eyes closing once more.

"Thank you!" She said, slowly slipping back into the welcome folds of sleep, content that this strange armored being would keep her safe as she napped for a few more minutes.

\* \* \*

><p>John handed Eliza over to Hannes while he bent over to grasp the Warthog's chassis. "You're never going to move that Chief." Hanji said, patting him on the shoulder.</p>

The Master Chief might have smirked if he didn't think it would be unbecoming of a Spartan to do so. "Just watch"

With one giant heave the Master Chief hauled the Warthog back onto its wheels, flipping it over like it weighed no more than a plank of wood. He clambered into it as Hannes, Hanji and Isaac all stared at

him, utterly shocked at this display of brute strength. Luckily enough the excess weapons had been secured and the boxes of shotgun shells hadn't spilled, so it was only a matter of picking them up out of the dust and gore and putting them in the passenger's seat.

Hanji moved forwards to climb into the Warthog beside the Spartan, but he held up a hand to stop her.

"No, you'll only get in the way with damaged equipment, get those kids to safety" The Chief said, starting up the engine. The ICE roared to life, charged with Hydrogen and ready for action once more.

Hanji bit back a reply, seeing the sense in his reasoning, though she still pouted.

"But I wanted to come along!" She said, frowning.

The Master Chief shook his head and began to inch the Warthog forwards past the two soldiers standing beside it.

"Maybe next time" He said, before flooring the gas and driving off into the carnage, determined to discover more about these monsters through blood, lead and steel.

## 6. Chapter 5: Savior in The Shadows

\*\*Hello again everyone! I'm really sorry for the scare earlier and for the delays with updating. My family is fixing to move back to Colorado in the beginning of summer, so we are doing our best to get the house cleaned up in time to put it on the market. So updates might be a bit slow during this period, but I plan to try to at least write a thousand words a day so updates should be more frequent.\*\*

\*\*Now, without further ado, onto the story!\*\*

\* \* \*

><p><strong>Chapter 5: The Battle of Trost; Savior in The Shadows<strong>

\* \* \*

><p><strong>Town of Trost, Wall Rose â€“ 2557 A.D.<strong>

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><p>The M12 Warthog slowed to a crawl as the Master Chief eased off the throttle, checking the surrounding area for any sign of the monsters that were swarming all over the ruined town of Trost, devouring unfortunate souls left and right with little resistance. Pulling into a shaded area concealed by rubble, the Spartan-II stopped the M12 and promptly hopped out, his armored boots alighting noiselessly on the cobblestone path. Reaching across the driver's seat, he lifted his MA5C out of the rack that secured it to the vehicle. Taking a moment to check over the weapon once more, rubbing the smooth Titanium casing and making sure there were no cracks in the LED display that held the ammo counter, the UNSC super soldier

pulled back the charging handle, cycling a round into the chamber before giving a grunt of satisfaction as he slipped into darkness, and became one with the shadows.<p>

"Hey Chief, are you alright?" Cortana asked quietly, causing the Spartan to stop dead in his tracks inside the doorway of an abandoned house.

"I'm Green Cortana" the Chief would say, brushing off her concern as he proceeded onwards into the primitive structure. John almost winced at the sound of the floorboards creaking underneath the weight of his armor, having learned early on in his career that making a single unintentional noise could jeopardize an entire operation and put those around him in danger. The shadows remained silent, and the Master Chief kept away from the windows, sticking to the darkness and systematically dousing any candles with his fingertips as he moved through the house.

"Johnâ€œ|" Cortana whispered plaintively, her soft voice echoing in the confines of the Spartan's mind as he entered what appeared to be a kitchen. The Master Chief said nothing for a moment as he swept the room for any sign of hostiles, his MA5C at the ready. The more solid stone construction of the floor beneath his feet as he stepped out into the open comforted the Spartan somewhat, though his body didn't show it.

"Something came over me back thereâ€œ|" The Chief said, noticing several platters of half-eaten food on the dinner table. He switched on his thermal vision. The glowing spots of red and orange indicated that the food was still quite warm, and he felt bubbles rising in his gut, threatening to growl. He hadn't eaten in over 4 years, and while his suspended animation in cryostasis slowed down his metabolic rate considerably, he felt as though he hadn't eaten in weeks. He swept his gaze over to the knocked over glasses that spilt their liquids onto the table. The deep red color that was staining the table top looked familiar, and he could smell the acrid scent of alcohol rising up from the mess confirmed his suspicions.

Cortana noticed his reaction to the food and smiled inwardly, knowing that the Spartan had been deprived of food for an unusually long time. "You're more human than you think, John." She said somewhat somberly, her words commenting on the soldier's physical situation as much as it was on his earlier statement.

Suddenly, a multitude of yellow blips appeared on the Chief's motion tracker causing the Spartan to freeze in his tracks and snap his rifle to the nearby doorway, centering the targeting reticle of his MA5C on the empty cobblestone street. Nothing but dust and the far off screams of terrified civilians filtered into the doorway. The contacts closed in fast, far to fast to be any civilians or military personnel on foot John reasoned. The sound of piton darts firing and sinking into wood and ceramic tiles overhead heralded the arrival of a small group of young humans as they soared past him on the rooftops, maneuvering about gracefully with their strange grappling devices as they pulled themselves through the air.

The Chief frowned inwardly, his enhanced reflexes allowing him to get a good look at the squad as they sailed past his position, wholly unaware of the cyborg's presence in the abandoned house. The young man leading the troupe had dark brown hair that whipped about his

face in a frenzy as he moved through the air, his two emerald eyes glinting in the afternoon sun. The kids' apparel was quite similar to the other soldiers that John had encountered; a white undershirt, brown pants and a long sleeved leather vest. The black straps of some sort of harness could be seen through the vest's parted front, probably securing them to the gadgets at their sides. The only difference that he noticed between these young soldiers and the others he had seen previously were the various patches marked with two crossed blades that probably stated their service branch. John also took note of what appeared to be replacement blades secured in what could only be described as two giant metal knife blocks holding six blades each.

Those blades must be quite prone to breaking or dulling if they need to carry around a set of twelve replacements on them at all times.

The Spartan thought, mulling over why they would use such inefficient weapons. The swords themselves seemed to be razor sharp from what the Spartan could tell as the group made their way past him across the rooftops. The thinness of the edge reminded him of the blade of his own combat knife, which was made of high grade titanium alloy honed down to a monomolecular edge. He knew that these people most likely didn't have access to titanium, so their blades would most likely be made of low quality steel, as it was likely the strongest metal available to their rather undeveloped society. The Chief blinked as time seemed to return to normal. His observations had occurred in little under three seconds, his quick mind processing everything as it had come to him. Shaking his head he ducked back into the building and crouched in the shadows.

The Master Chief gave them a moment to distant themselves from his position before peeking out from behind the door way, assault rifle at the ready as he scanned the street for hostiles. No more squads appeared to be following directly behind the first, causing the Spartan to wonder if the young soldiers were on their way to support another force, or if their command had been caught so off guard that they were the only troops available to lead a rather disorganized counter attack. Deciding from experience that discretion was the better part of valor the Spartan set out in pursuit, determined to shadow the young men and women from the darkness of the alleyways and abandoned homes.

\* \* \*

><p>It had been four and a half grueling years for young Eren Jaeger; a member of the 104th Trainee Squad. The dark haired youth had devoted his life to the pursuit of revenge against the Titan menace that threatened to consume all of humanity ever since his mother had been killed. He was in Shingansama when the Wall Maria fell. He witnessed the carnage that the Titans had wrought, heard the terrified screams of his fellow human being echoing off the blood stained walls that were supposed to protect them. He saw his mother, her dark hair matted in blood as she cried out to him from afar, being devoured before his very eyes, her body bitten in half by a giant, leering 14 meter class Titan with hair the color of bleached straw. He still remembered the hot droplets of blood, his mother's blood that flecked his face as the Titan's massive jaws ended her life, staining its teeth and chin with gore. The very thought sent a burning hot pulse of rage up Eren's spine. Today was the day that he would claim his first Titan, and it's death would mark the beginning of the end for the monsters at Humanity's door.</p>

This would be his crucible, his harrowing, his trial by fire. And by what ever gods or goddesses in the heavens or the world beneath, he would have his \*\*revenge!\*\*

Flanking him was one of his oldest friends, Armin Arlert, a blonde haired, blue eyed youth who's calm expression belied his nervousness. Unlike his dark haired companion, Armin was quite nervous about facing the Titan menace, terrified in fact. He too survived the hell of Shingansama, and he along with Eren and Mikasa Akerman had enlisted in the army together to avoid starving in the streets and to have their chance at revenge. However, the thought of meeting his end in the jaws of a Titan, or worse still, surviving them only to boil to death in one's belly was unappealing to say the least. But he would still stand by his friend until the bitter end, perhaps even giving his life so that Eren and the others might escape. It was all he thought himself capable of given the abysmal odds that they were faced with. Being the first squad out to assist the main garrison force attempting to evacuate the rest of the civilian populace meant that they were alone if when they inevitably made contact with the Titan menace.

The other members of the group included Mina Carolina, a kind, perky young woman with her dark hair bound up in pigtails, two brown haired youths by the names Mylius Zeramuski and Nac Tius who flanked her on either side. Keeping pace with them came the blonde, short haired Thomas Wagner, who joked about keeping a kill count to sort out a competition when they returned alive.

None of them noticed a massive, green armored form tailing them from the shadows of the street down below. It was incredibly fast, easily able to keep a steady pace with their Three Dimensional Maneuver Gears as they zipped through the air even as it ducked into cover through small alley ways and abandoned homes. Had the group known that such a figure was tailing them they might have moved to confront it, but their eyes were firmly set straight ahead towards their goal. After all, who would think to look down from three stories up at this juncture with their foes so close?

The sight that came to the eyes of the 104th Trainee Squad members as they neared the vanguard sent to stall the Titans' advance sent jolts of shock rippling through their minds. Titans were everywhere, milling about and devouring people left and right while civilians fled through the streets below, smaller Titans in hot pursuit. Isolated squads were bogged down keeping larger Titans at bay, and were rapidly being decimated as they attempted to stem the tide of monsters pouring out into the streets.

"I can't believe there's so many Titans out already!" Mina cried out, tightening her already white knuckle grip on her blades. The thought of fighting so many of those monstrosities without heavier backup set her teeth on edge, and she had to stop herself from hyperventilating.

Thomas gulped audibly next to her. "The entire front line has been butchered!" He gasped, his straw colored hair bristling like an angry hedgehog in the wind.

"What the hell happened? Those hot shots have more experience than any one of us!" Nac growled, firing off his 3DMG once more as the

pressurized gas within the tanks at his sides leaving a white vapor trail behind him.

"I knew this wasn't going to be easyâ€|" Eren muttered under his breath, his intense emerald green eyes locked on the scene before him as his brow furrowed. "But this is tooâ€|" He cut himself off, his heart catching in his chest at the sight of a large form moving amongst the buildings over 50 meters ahead. It jumped, and he knew he and his squad were in deep shit. "Watch out! It's an abnormal!" he shouted, swerving out of the way just in time to avoid the oncoming Titan and it soared through the air before crashing into a nearby tower with all the grace of a fat pigeon hitting a window. Eren managed to catch hold of a rooftop gutter while Armin and the rest of his squad landed above him, staring back at the Titan as it clung to the masonry of the damaged structure.

It pulled its head back, and the sight of what was between its jaws froze everyone in their positions. Thomas Wagner for all his boisterous nature had been unable to get out of the way in time and he lay trapped between the monstrosity's lips, staring helplessly at his companions. Eren and the surviving members of his squad could only look on in horror as the Titan threw its head back, parted its lips and swallowed their comrade whole without so much as a scream. Then, as if nothing had happened, the perverse mockery of humanity let go of the tower and casually began to walk off in search of more victims, forgetting the rest of the squad's presence entirely.

Eren's eyes widened, his breaths coming heavy and quick as his nostrils flared. An emotion that brewed inside of him for so many years began to simmer and boil outwards; anger. But it was more than mere anger. It was a blisteringly sort of anger that came up from the very depths of his gut, a kind of anger that swept aside all thoughts aside from his blind fury. The sight of Thomas so ruthlessly being consumed caused something inside of Eren to snap, and he let forth a cry that curdled the blood of his squad mates that could only look at him in shock. This was a cry of pure, unbridled rage. "HEY! WHAT THE FUCK DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?!" He roared, firing off the piton darts and securing an anchors on the nearby rooftops as he set off in hot pursuit of the ambling giant, his primal instincts blurring out everything else as his comrades called out for him to hold back. They went unheeded as Eren charged ahead, screaming his defiance to the heavens as he went.

"Get back here you \_monster\_! You won't get away! You won't get away with killing Thomas like that! I'll tear you to pieces you son of a bitch!" He roared, gaining momentum as he glided underneath an overhanging bridge and skimmed along the street, spinning around in preparation for his first kill.

He never reached his target. As he closed with the monster, he noticed a dark form moving below him. By the time Eren realized his peril, it was too late. The Titan that had been lying in ambush leaped up and snapped its jaws and Eren's vision went white as a hot blast of agony racked his left leg. Blood flowed freely from the severed stump that had once been his knee, flowing out onto the shingles and street below as the unfortunate soul's momentum carried him across several more rooftops. Shattered bits of ceramic tile lacerated Eren's skin and embedded themselves in his flesh as he crashed through a peaked roof, then another, and another until he

stopped. Hundreds of tiny shards dug into his body from every angle, causing untold agony in combination with his now useless leg. Eren struggled to draw breath, his diaphragm too compressed from the force of multiple impacts for him to recuperate. He lay there, helpless to the world as his mind became a foggy haze of pain and exhaustion, and he slowly slipped into the realm of unconsciousness.

\* \* \*

><p>The Master Chief sighed and shook his head as the dark haired boy charged off ahead of the rest of his surviving comrades, breaking formation in pursuit of the Titan that had swallowed his companion whole. They were a disorganized mob now, desperately trying to catch up to their reckless leader, trying to rein him in with cries of caution. Broken and distracted they were now extremely vulnerable to oncoming Titans and the situation was bound to turn dire.</p>

"He's a dead fool, and his squad will die with him if we don't do something" Cortana chimed in John's ear, marking the young man with a blue diamond shaped waypoint on the Spartan's HUD.

The Chief held his position for a moment, weighing the odds of the situation. "I'd like to observe their battle tactics firstâ€|" He said, moving towards a stack of crates piled up against a second story building. It only took him half a second to scale all three of them and land with a dull 'thunk' on the ceramic shingles on the rooftop. He got up in time to see the leader get his leg sheered off to the knee by a hidden foe when he had closed in for the kill, and disappeared amongst the maze of roofs. John didn't even sigh. The kid was already bound to die when he took off away from the safety of his squad, and now his death was assured. Still, seeing the sort of disorganized mob of young people coming to the aid of their doomed commander dredged up dark memories of the Human-Covenant War, memories of police officers and servicemen attempting to help their downed comrades, only to be vaporized in a hail of plasma fire. The image of a mother running back to a ruin of molten slag crying out for her baby only to find the twin tines of a plasma sword protruding from her chest, and that of a father desperately attempting to shield his loved ones with his body as crystalline purple projectiles plunged into his flesh, detonating and tearing him asunder before his children's very eyes.

"Chiefâ€|they need you" Cortana whispered, sensing the Spartan's internal conflict. Her plaintive tone struck a chord within the UNSC soldier, and without a further word, the Master Chief flipped the safety off his MA5C and set off towards the disorganized squad, determined to pull them out of whatever mess they were headed into on Cortana's behest.

\* \* \*

><p>Mina Carolina cried out in horror as Eren went flying, legless and trailing blood through the air, smashing through peaked rooftops once every few meters before he completely disappeared. Armin Arlert was similarly dismayed, and he let out a high pitched wail of anguish and surprise as his oldest friend vanished from view. Mina pulled up alongside Nac, casting him a worried glance as they continued on towards the Titan, wondering if Eren was still alive despite his injuries.</p>

The moment she cast another look his way, he vanished in a fizz of blood as his body collided with the outstretched palm of a Titan, spattering the side of her face with gore. She screamed, unable to tear her eyes away from the gruesome scene as yet another of her comrades died at the hands of these beasts. It proved to be a fatal mistake. Another Titan, curious about the shiny steel cord stretched taunt right in front of its eyes decided to give it and exploratory tug, sending the unfortunate woman lurching through the air as her harnessed pulled at her, inevitably slamming her up against the side of a nearby building.

Mina felt her shoulders dislocate, forcefully being pushed away from her body by the dizzying impact. Something in her neck twisted and compressed in a way it wasn't meant to do, and a fiery white hot lance of pain shot up her entire spine. She opened her mouth to scream, but found that she couldn't draw breath. The air had been blasted from her lungs, and even if she had been able to breathe, the sight of a massive, emotionless face looming over her would have frozen the air in her lungs. Mina wanted to cry out, to scream in terror, but her body wouldn't heed her commands. She tried to cover her face with one hand in a vain attempt to stave off the inevitable attack that would seal her fate, but all her fingers were able to do was twitch as another burst of agony washed over her.

All Mina could do now was watch as the Titan picked her up between its massive, paw-like hands and held her firmly. Its jaws opened impossibly wide, blasting hot, steamy air into her face from its cavernous maw. A morbid sense of curiosity forced her eyes to remain open as she stared blankly into the blisteringly hot abyss that was to be her grave.

Is this the end?! I don't want to die! Please God! She screamed mentally as the hellish jaws of death grew closer with agonizing slowness in her adrenaline charged state, attempting to break free even though her injured body refused to move.

Momâ€| dadâ€| I'm so sorryâ€|

Then suddenly, seemingly out over nowhere came a massive shadow from above, and the Titan was buried underneath an avalanche of sharp roofing tiles and drab olive green. Mina's eyes widened at the sight of a humanoid form wrestling the Titan to the ground, pinning it underneath the weight of its armor as it wrapped its arms around the beast's neck. Mina watched the titanic struggle that was to follow with a sense of clarity that day that would stay with her until the day she died.

\* \* \*

><p>The Master Chief leapt from roof to roof, making sure to cross only the strongest sections that would bear the half ton bulk of his MJOLNIR Mark VI as he broke from cover, running parallel to the disorganized band as fast as he dared. Ceramic shingles shattered underneath his boots, sliding down the sides of the sloped roofs in great streams as the half ton soldier thundered past. The time for stealth had flown for the moment, though going full speed in this situation could potentially leave John in dire straits if he tore his Achilles tendon while maneuvering through the rooftop jungle. He caught a glimpse of one of the squad members being reduced to a bloody pulp from a Titan's open palmed swipe, killing the poor boy

instantly. He likely never knew what hit him. The Master Chief, used to being detached from the horrors of war dismissed his unfortunate death, though he did feel a bubble of anger rise in his throat. This conflict so far was hardly a battle; it was a blatant massacre, and an all too familiar scene to the 35 year veteran of the Human Covenant war. Even a Spartan never got used to seeing dead civilians, and these green troops were so young and wet behind the ears that they might as well have been throwing rocks at Lek'golo or Hunters, the heavy organic assault platforms utilized by the Covenant Hierarchy to terrible effect during the war.<p>

The Master Chief closed with the squad in time to see the young dark haired girl's wire being snatched by a passing Titan, sending her careening down and smashing into a nearby structure. Her companion was snatched by the leg and yanked aside. His screams knifed through the air, but were quickly silenced by a sickeningly loud 'crunch'. The girl lay stunned, her back up against the cracked stone facade of a higher class home, unable to so much as breathe as the Titan that had snagged her wire bore down upon her.

Spartan time kicked in as the Chief leaped from his high perch over four stories up, causing a cascade of ceramic tiles to fall to the ground, burying the Titan beneath a downpour of sharp rock as the Spartan came down on top of it with every ounce of force he could muster. John felt the thing's ribs snap underneath his armored boots as they caved its chest in, covering his legs in steaming hot blood. The Titan attempted to sit up, but the Chief closed in, wrapping his arms around the monster's neck. It snapped its jaws and howled at him, as the war veteran began to twist its neck. Iron-dense muscles and motorized servos combined with the liquid crystal layer of John's MJLONIR Mark VI went into action. Vertebrae snapped, skin and muscles tore and the Titan howled for one final time before its head was ripped from its shoulders. It soaked the street in a torrent of blood as the Master Chief simply punted the decapitated head down the street before drawing his combat knife and sinking it into the nape of the twitching Titan's neck

With the immediate threat dealt with at the moment, the Spartan turned to regard the injured young woman at his feet. She lay slumped against the wall, her eyes dulled in pain as she stared up into the Chief's visor. John noticed the corners of her mouth twitching as though she couldn't quite decide whether to frown or smile and inevitably got caught in-between. Judging by her position and her inability to move, the Master Chief guessed that she might have blown out a disk in her neck or fractured her spine. If that was the case, she might live out the rest of her life as a cripple. John pondered this for a moment, fingering the hilt of his combat knife as he contemplated putting her out of her misery. But as she drew breath and the sparks of life returned to her grey eyes the Spartan sheathed his knife, confident in her determination to live.

The Chief bent over, gathering up the girl's limp form in his arms before heading down an alley way, certain that the other members of the squad were dead. The dark haired soldier's eyes widened for a moment and her heart pounded in her chest. John felt her pulse quicken through his suit and quickly set her down in a pile of old, discarded hay. He covered her up partially to mask her from any Titans before turning around knocking down a nearby door, immersing himself in the shadows within the building and vanishing from view.

\* \* \*

><p>Mina wanted to frown, but found that she was too tired to move her facial muscles. What had just saved her from a most grisly fate? Was it some elite solider from a secret branch of the military? Or had some abnormal Titan suddenly donned a suit of green armor and set about destroying any others of its kind that it saw? These questions swirled about in her mind as the enigmatic armored figure gently laid her injured body in a pile of hay in the darkness of an alleyway. She found the gentleness that the giant displayed to be rather unnerving after she witnessed the stranger rip a Titan's head from its shoulders as if it were a rotten chicken. Her mind became hazy as exhaustion overtook her, the veil of unconsciousness fast encroaching on her vision as it became obscured. Her final thought though was crystal clear as the green giant kicked down a door and became one with the darkness, disappearing from view.<p>

There was no doubt, and in Mina's last moments of consciousness before sleep took her, the young woman's lips curled into a smile.

\_There's a Savior lurking in the shadowsâ€\_|\_

End  
file.